

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT  
Attorney Docket No. Q68616

having an index n<sub>2</sub> lower than n<sub>1</sub>, and a second cylindrical cladding of circular section surrounding the first cladding and having an index n<sub>3</sub>.

8. (Amended) A method according to claim 5, characterized in that the central optical preform and the rods having an index n<sub>3</sub> are placed in a sleeve (5, 16) within which the atmosphere is controlled for drawing by establishing a vacuum or a partial pressure of neutral gases such as helium or reagents such as C<sub>2</sub>F<sub>6</sub>.

10. (Amended) A method according to claim 5, characterized in that the interstices between the rods (15) having an index n<sub>3</sub> are filled and the atmosphere in the volume delimited by the rods is controlled for drawing by establishing a vacuum or a partial pressure of neutral gases such as helium or reagents such as C<sub>2</sub>F<sub>6</sub>.

11. (Amended) A method according to claim 5, characterized in that the second cladding is enveloped in a low-index polymer coating (20).